United Nations A/57/PV.25

General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

25th plenary meeting
Monday, 7 October 2002, 3.00 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 44 and 10 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/270 and A/57/270/Corr.1)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/57/1)

Ms. Plaisted (United States of America): This past year has witnessed extraordinary events and dramatic developments in achieving the goals of the Millennium Summit. These have been marked as well in the work of this Organization.

In the field of international peace and security, the United States has led the world community in vigorous pursuit of the terrorists of last September. Through our combined efforts, Afghanistan is beginning its recovery from war and Taliban rule, but we must continue to combat international terrorism to protect ourselves from this threat to peace.

With General Assembly resolutions 56/1 and 56/88, the United Nations has shown resolve against international terrorism. We must remain vigilant and renew our long-term commitments to the fight against terrorism.

All members should continue or increase their commitment to carrying out the terms of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) in the areas of legislation, customs, extradition, immigration, law enforcement, arms traffic and financial asset controls. All nations should become parties to the twelve universal United Nations or United Nations specialized agency conventions on international terrorism. I am pleased to say that my Government has now become a party to all twelve.

Other threats to international peace and security loom as well. Addressing this assembly, President Bush said the United Nations must deal with Iraq's twelve years of defiance of the Security Council. He made it clear that Iraq must comply with its agreements to disarm.

In the Middle East, the Quartet partners, who include the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, are working with Israelis, Palestinians and other regional leaders to stop terrorism and violence and return the region to the path of achieving comprehensive peace. President Bush has articulated a vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders.

During this year has also seen the emergence of a new consensus and commitment to attack poverty, hunger and disease, and advance the goals of development. In announcing the creation of the Millennium Challenge Account, President Bush said the growing divide between wealth and poverty,

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-62197 (E)

between opportunity and misery, is both a challenge to our compassion and a source of instability. We must confront it and include every African, Asian, Latin American and Muslim in the expanding circle of development.

Clearly there is no simple blueprint for overcoming all economic and social obstacles that impede sustainable development. But, we believe that the Secretary-General is correct when he reports that the Doha Development Agenda and the Monterrey Consensus demonstrate a renewed international commitment to a process in which the developing countries have primary responsibility for their own development, but which requires both trade and finance opportunities to expand the benefits of globalization to all. We can do a better job in combating poverty if we place greater attention on two aspects of the agenda that underlie most success stories: governance and social investment which enable people and countries to become more productive; and better measuring, monitoring, and managing for development results.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that disregard for the environment threatens the world's natural resources, and all who depend on them for food, fuel, shelter and livelihood. Our challenge, then, is to widen the circle of development and include those who are left out.

The international community and the United Nations have also made progress this year in fighting the diseases that ravage our populations. President Bush has made a commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Our support for the Global Fund and the International Mother-and-Child HIV Prevention Initiative will combat the devastation wrought by infectious disease.

We must also do more to combat hunger. Today again, millions are at risk of famine, in Africa, North Korea and elsewhere. Emergency relief is essential and we call on all nations where food is plentiful to contribute to this effort. The Secretary-General has reported on the great potential of science and technology to address food security needs. Efforts to invest in technology, including biotechnology, to raise agricultural productivity are key to the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Persistent instability and conflict continue to displace civilians all over the world. Women and children account for the vast majority of those affected by armed conflict. Children, moreover, remain particularly vulnerable to conflict situations in numerous ways. The United States recently ratified the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography. We urge other countries to do the same.

The history of the past century has shown that the most stable, tolerant, and prosperous countries are those that promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. We welcome the appointment of Sergio Vieira de Mello as the third High Commissioner for Human Rights. We cannot overestimate the importance of developing and maintaining democratic governments, subject to the rule of law, that respect and protect individual liberty.

The United Nations has made and will continue to make a valuable contribution to improving the lives of people all over the world. Real progress has been made this year in advancing the objectives of the Charter. We compliment the Secretary-General, the many components of the United Nations system, and the collective of Member States themselves. But so much more remains to be done.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Sir, many speakers have preceded me in this debate; naturally therefore I run the risk of repeating much of what has already been said. However, in debates, arguments are often honed through repeated presentation, albeit in different words. The Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization are both, as usual, examples of excellent professional work. They are comprehensive, precise and of course useful. The one on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration takes account of the various steps taken by the United Nations system so far as well as the progress made. The report also indicates what needs to be done in future.

Similarly, the other report on the working of the Organisation makes us understand the hard work put in by all in the United Nations system in pursuit of the objectives and goals of the Charter, and the tasks set to it by the membership. When read along with the Secretary-General's report on the Second Phase of the

United Nations Reforms, it demonstrates the will of the Organisation to constantly adapt itself to new demands as it sharpens its efficiency and expands its capacity. My delegation however, would like to see the report on the Work of the Organization issued at least six weeks prior to the opening of each new session of the General Assembly. This year, it was much delayed. Consideration may also be given to combining several closely linked reports into a single document.

Sir, the Millennium Declaration embodies the global community's collective wisdom in regard to the successes and failures of previous decades, and sets out some fundamental principles and objectives for the future along with some guidelines on the way forward. It is now incumbent upon us to keep it in view in all our endeavours to build a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. According to this Declaration, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. We are therefore duty-bound to all peoples of the world, especially the most vulnerable, and particularly children, to whom the future belongs.

The United Nations is a primary vehicle through which to reach our goals. However, the Organisation can only do as much as we enable it to do by providing the necessary mandate and resources. Therefore in the final analysis, it is we, the members who are individually and collectively responsible for bearing our share of burden. Nations, big and small, rich and poor, strong and weak have all to conscientiously make our best efforts, in concert, if we hope to achieve the goals that we have set ourselves.

We have to painstakingly identify the capacity and ability of each and assign each an appropriate role. However, while each nation must play its role, the more endowed must accept a greater and more decisive responsibility and discharge it diligently and conscientiously. When we talk about dignity, equity, equality and justice at the global level, it calls for sacrifice; it calls for us to look beyond selfish and short-term individual or national interests into the realm of common and long-term global interests.

In the last year, we have achieved much success in addressing the issues of peace and security, development and poverty eradication, protecting the common environment, human rights, democracy and good governance, protecting the vulnerable, meeting the special needs of Africa and strengthening the United Nations — the areas identified by the Millennium Declaration. Among those successes are: progress made in peacekeeping and peace-building efforts in Angola, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and East Timor; a lessening of tension in South Asia; the global Conferences held in Monterrey and in Johannesburg; the special session on Children and the Conference on Ageing; the transition of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union and the embracing of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the international community. Major movements are also taking place in the sphere of the international legal system.

While some of the successes are actual concrete achievements on the ground, others are still in the form of agreements, commitments and pledges that await implementation and fulfilment. These are like the first hesitant creaks that we hear before the large wheels, bearing a heavy burden, actually start moving forward. We must sustain and increase the force behind the wheels to make them move and accelerate. As they do so, we must be alert to the steering.

My country has been doing its bit in contributing to these successes. We are doing so by actively participating in international efforts, in particular, peacekeeping missions. We are also pursuing an aggressive development policy at home. Bangladesh today is an example of a country that sought to break out of the trap of poverty through our own efforts. Through a mixture of sound macroeconomic policies, appropriate utilization of external assistance and innovative home-grown ideas, such as microcredit, food for education and non-formal education, Bangladesh has come a long way from the "basket-case" it was once known as in the early 1970s. Today, it produces over 26.8 million tons of food grains to feed its 130 million people. It has reduced its population growth rate from a high 3.2 per cent to a modest 1.6 per cent over the past two decades. It prides itself on an excellent and functioning civil society. Gender mainstreaming is a major policy goal towards which there has been remarkable progress. The overall health and education profile has been greatly raised. Consolidation and further deepening of democracy, the rule of law and human rights are the cornerstones of the Government's policies. Unarguably, we have a long way to go. But, we believe, we are on the right track.

In our view, development is only achievable against a matrix of pluralism, liberalism, democracy, good governance, human rights and women's empowerment. While development must be primarily a national concern, it is the international community that must provide the global background and the enabling ambience.

We must draw some satisfaction and a great deal of strength, courage and confidence from our successes. But we cannot afford complacency. We must face up to the much more daunting challenges piled up along the road ahead. This pile is made up of the unfinished war against terrorism, the lack of progress in consolidating peace and security, the reconstruction and rehabilitation in Afghanistan, the simmering tension in South Asia, the festering conflicts in Somalia, Liberia and Western Sahara, famine in Southern Africa, the growing gap between rich and poor, the North and the South, lack of a level playing field in international trade, the widening digital divide, continuing poverty and deprivation, vast swathes of populations suffering indignity under foreign occupation or oppressive regimes and the scourge of narcotic drugs and diseases. These are but to mention only a few.

We must all pick up our shovels and ceaselessly dig away at the pile. As we coordinate our efforts, the shovels will be transformed into earth digging machines, bulldozers and recycling plants.

Thus, the key is in shared responsibility, coordinated efforts and sacrifices. And the United Nations is the instrument through which to achieve them. We must, therefore, make every effort to modernize this instrument, make it more powerful, more efficient and, in every respect, more capable. This will involve making it truly representative and democratic. If democracy is the best system at the municipal and national levels, it must also be the best system globally. It will mean that everyone and every nation will be heard, listened to and respected. While pledging our support for this goal, we call on all fellow members to do so also.

At the same time, efforts to reform the day-to-day functioning of the United Nations must continue. The Secretary-General and the previous President of the General Assembly worked hard and made commendable progress in this area. We are confident that the current presidency will continue to successfully strive in the same direction, particularly in the pursuit of revitalizing the working methods of the General Assembly. My delegation will offer those endeavours our fullest support.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): The Millennium Declaration is both a milestone and a road map for a renewed strategy and sharpened focus on the development agenda for the twenty-first century. Lessons learned in the United Nations system since its inception have shaped a common vision of humankind to deliver a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, as detailed in the Millennium Declaration.

The world leaders' Declaration is a timely call for the international community to counter the unleashing of threats to international peace and security, which indeed materialized soon after its adoption — challenges which have reached unprecedented levels of sophistication, magnitude, reach and intensity, especially in today's globalized world. All those facets of the danger were fully embodied in the monstrous tragedy of 11 September.

These threats are no longer confined to the areas of conflict or crisis. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is also identified as a security threat falling under the Security Council mandate. The quest of United Nations Members to combat international terrorism through diplomatic processes and to draft the appropriate international instruments is hampered by political differences. On the other hand, the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which was established by Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), has found greater resonance among member States. A political solution to heighten the fight against international terrorism is an additional avenue that the Secretary-General would need to consider.

Indeed, meeting Millennium Development Goals is a significant way of uprooting the adverse social, economic and human rights conditions in which terrorist tendencies flourish, and displacing them with a more enabling and empowering socio-economic environment.

The success stories of the United Nations role in Bougainville, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and in other peace-building efforts are causes for celebration and reflection. While each situation involving the transition of authority deserves to be handled on a case-by-case basis, the lessons we gain from each one are valuable for replication in other

crisis management and peace-building efforts of the United Nations.

The fatigue or lethargy that may have crept in over the decades of peacekeeping operations is addressed by the Brahimi report on reforms in the peacekeeping sector. The first phase of these reforms will, as expected, consume considerable additional resources. We hope that this will level off to a sustainable level, when United Nations troop readiness and deployment capacity successfully meet immediate peacekeeping needs. We are also confident that the Secretary-General will ensure, in the long-term, that the funds allocated to peacekeeping are justified and consistent with the anticipated outputs of the conflict-prevention and peaceful dispute-resolution strategies of the Organizations.

A balanced approach to peace and security can enhance Member States' commitments to the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), in particular through the commitments of developed partners to assist home-grown development initiatives of developing partners.

In an ideal world, peace and security could be realized merely by building trust among nations and States. Trust cannot be built on the proliferation or build-up of arms and weapons of mass destruction. Renewed efforts to achieve peace and security would need to commit global social-spending resources that could be used to eradicate poverty within the time frame of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We recognize the positive steps taken by the major parties to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) and urge others to consider favourably taking similar steps.

The development side of these MDGs can be achieved through the substantial commitments and the cumulative policy directions for strategic global partnerships emerging from the Doha Ministerial Conference, the Monterrey Consensus on development financing and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The outcomes of global conferences, such as the special session on small islands developing States (SIDS), the Conference on women and the Beijing+5 commitments, the special sessions on children and on HIV/AIDS, the World Assembly on Ageing, the United Nations Habitat II Conference and the Cairo Conference on Population and Development address disabling social trends that have emerged in parallel to the forces of globalization. The shrinking of resources available for social development, which is increasingly linked to stringent world trade and economic conditions, has stifled the development and economic growth of developing countries, with their 80 per cent share of the global population — and even more of the world's poverty problems.

Fiji appreciates the contributions to our national development obtained through official development assistance, foreign aid, debt and credit. Our national growth has, consequently, tended to be driven by external factors and factors outside of our control as a developing State. Now we envisage internally-driven strategic development. We therefore welcome global commitments to initiatives that will see developing countries like Fiji feed our national, home-grown growth mechanisms. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative is a major step in this direction, which we welcome for its promising ideals and strategies aimed at development.

This new model of development is premised on a prevailing climate of international peace and security. It is also inextricably linked to a new culture of democratic governance and human rights awareness, which also means building from within rather than imposing from outside — whether as a conditionality for trade, aid, credit or as a political tool. Traditional mechanisms have in the past led to abysmal poverty and political instability.

The recently adopted Nasonini Declaration embodies these concerns and confirms our regional peace-building efforts under the Biketawa Declaration 2000 of the Pacific Island Forum. We pledge ongoing commitment to the NPT, the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and to the treaties and protocols against terrorism and organized crime, to which Fiji is a party. We are also in dialogue with the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC).

Fiji endorses the Millennium Declaration's strong emphasis on integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, in particular, the commitment under section III, paragraph 17, to address the special needs of SIDS by implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly rapidly and in full.

Beyond SIDS issues, our region continues to advocate global responses for global programmes. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation is just that, but will require strong action to meet the commitments made on the environment.

In this connection, Fiji in incorporating the Millennium Development Goals in our Strategic Development Plan 2003 to 2005, and highlights governance, education and health sector policies for focused attention. We are supporting the steps to implement the Honiara Declaration on law enforcement, and the Aitutaki Declaration on governance and accountability. The increasing participation of NGOs and the private sector in governance issues is very encouraging.

As health and education are fundamental building blocks for society, their linkages to governance issues are increasingly apparent. Fiji is committed to the Pacific Island Forum Basic Education Action Plan, adopted in New Zealand in 2001. The Plan recognizes the need to build resources for basic education in the region. It also promotes incorporation of gender and governance issues in basic education.

The MDG's focus on the treatment and prevention of diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, dengue fever and tuberculosis, is very relevant as these diseases are becoming more prevalent in Fiji. We take them seriously and will continue collaborating with United Nations specialized agencies to increase awareness on AIDS, while addressing problems related to HIV/AIDS, dengue fever, tuberculosis and malaria.

Fiji continues to pledge support for the Secretary-General's commitment to and follow-up work on the Millennium Declaration and its development goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): It is has been two years since the Millennium Summit, when our heads of State and Government solemnly adopted the Millennium Declaration, vigorously reaffirming their commitment to defending the principles of human dignity, equality and equity and their determination to give their all to establishing a more peaceful, more prosperous and fairer world.

In order to achieve that, the Summit defined a set of Goals with which we are all familiar. While these Goals, taken individually, may be nothing new, their consolidation into a single Declaration adopted by the largest gathering of heads of State in modern history gave the Declaration a new scope and political significance. Today, we can state that these objectives represent a work tool that is widely known to and used by the international community. We must acknowledge, however, that some questions regarding the use of that tool remain unresolved, in particular those involving the establishment of a viable monitoring system, which is a particularly complex endeavour with respect to methodology.

We wish to thank here the Secretary-General for his first annual report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The report offers a good understanding of the efforts made, results achieved and problems encountered. In the light of the report, we clearly see that we will attain the Millennium Development Goals only in piecemeal fashion if we do not accelerate the pace of our work. Progress to date shows us nevertheless that these objectives are realistic. It is therefore our collective duty to achieve them.

To that end, we must strengthen coordination and cooperation at all levels — national, regional and global — among all the actors concerned: Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. In this context, we should, in our opinion, attach special priority to strengthening the interaction between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, especially following the Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences.

I wish to stress our great appreciation of the United Nations and its Secretary-General. The Organization has indeed made major efforts to mobilize additional human and financial resources with a view to preventing conflicts and natural disasters, to fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other scourges, and to contributing to more sustainable development. Moreover, the United Nations must play a crucial role in coordinating and following up on efforts to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. As a campaign manager, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme has a special role to play in this context. These various roles and activities of the system must, however, be further strengthened. Switzerland will therefore continue fully to support the United Nations in these efforts.

The achievement of the Millennium Goals will depend first and foremost on the determination of countries to take all the necessary steps to ensure the protection of human rights, good governance, the rule of law, the eradication of poverty and the safeguarding of natural resources with a view to achieving more human and more sustainable development. As the Secretary-General also emphasizes in his report, the principle of sovereignty involves the duty of every State to assume responsibility for protecting its citizens and for guaranteeing them the enjoyment of basic freedoms and their own physical safety.

Convinced that a community cannot be stronger than the weakest of its members, Switzerland shares the view that it is preferable to focus our efforts on eliminating the causes of conflict and on its prevention than to have subsequently to address their consequences. In our view, only economic, social and political stability will enable everyone to develop and progress. The quest for such stability is therefore assuredly the best way to prevent wars and conflicts.

We look forward to the issuance of the next annual report and sincerely hope that it will reflect further progress in the follow-up of the Goals set out by the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Last Friday, in introducing his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General sounded an alarm. The Goals and objectives adopted by our heads of State at the Millennium Summit are more distant than ever. The action of the international community has been inadequate. It is obvious that, if we continue in this direction, it will be impossible to attain the Goals enshrined in the Declaration.

Our heads of State pledged to reduce extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. Today, we are very far from attaining that objective. Some 23 per cent of the world's population subsists on less than $1 a day. Hundreds of millions of people struggle daily with hunger, disease and environmental problems. The gap between the richest and the poorest widens every day. On average, the inhabitants of the developed world consume six times more natural resources than those of the developing world. In parts of Africa and Asia, we are losing the battle against extreme poverty. In Latin America, progress is extremely slow. In the developing countries, 826 million people suffer from malnutrition. Furthermore, even if we succeed in reducing poverty by half by the year 2015, 900 million people will still be living in extreme poverty.

Our heads of State pledged to reduce infant mortality by two thirds. If we continue at the present rate, by the year 2015 we will have been able to reduce the rate of infant mortality only by 25 per cent. In some nations, of every 1,000 children born, over 300 die of easily preventable diseases before the age of five. In fact, over 30,000 children die every day of such diseases. In Africa, the rate of infant mortality has hardly changed because of a resurgence of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

In particular, our heads of State pledged to reduce and to halt the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus, malaria and other serious diseases. However, those epidemics are spreading fast. The situation is critical in Africa and the Caribbean, and worsening in Asia and Eastern Europe. In 2001, there were 5 million new cases of HIV infection, while more than 3 million people died of AIDS. The great majority of infected persons in poor countries had no access to the medicines needed to stop the disease's advance. The same is true in the cases of malaria and tuberculosis, which have worsened because of the appearance of strains resistant to antibiotics.

Our heads of State also pledged to ensure that all children of the world can complete the first cycle of primary education and to eliminate gender inequalities in education. While it is true that school enrolment has increased, that growth is too slow, and it will be impossible to reach these targets by the year 2015.

The Millennium Summit adopted a series of broad but realistic goals with a view to building a more peaceful, more prosperous and more just world. Today we must revitalize our efforts to achieve those goals. That requires efforts at the national and international levels.

In the national sphere, it is indispensable to adopt new public policies and to reform governmental institutions in order to give greater priority to the eradication of poverty. It is scandalous to see that of the 132 countries for which we have information, 59 invest more on arms than on education and health. We must invest heavily and systematically in our human resources. It is necessary to fight inequality and extreme poverty. Only in that way can we create a political, social and economic environment that is more just and more equitable.

Likewise, it is necessary to strengthen and to consolidate our democratic institutions. Democracy encourages leaders to adopt better public policies and to protect the most vulnerable groups. Political freedom increases opportunities for economic and social growth at the same time as it creates conditions favourable to the use of those opportunities. Democracy is therefore indispensable to achieving just development.

At the same time, it is necessary to fight corruption and to guarantee good governance. It is indispensable to punish those unjust leaders that enrich themselves through corruption and who impoverish their peoples. It is necessary to create a body of universal jurisdiction to bring those criminals to trial. It is scandalous that some developed countries are encouraging corruption beyond their borders by allowing bribes offered overseas to be used as an income tax deduction. We trust that we will soon see the adoption of a United Nations convention on corruption in the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee which is now meeting in Vienna.

At the international level, it is indispensable to provide the developing countries with sufficient resources to meet the goals enshrined in the Millennium Declaration. According to the World Bank, in order to attain those goals, there is need for an additional $40 billion to $60 billion in annual international assistance. Given that, it is scandalous that over the last two decades, an increasingly lower percentage of Gross Domestic Product is being allocated to official development assistance. It is necessary to increase that assistance in accordance with the agreement reached at the Monterrey Conference.

At the same time, it is necessary to create an open, equitable and non-discriminatory trade and financial system that promotes growth in the poorest countries. At the present time, structural obstacles, financial imbalances, the flight of capital, the lack of capital for productive and social investment, restricted access to international markets and production subsidies all prevent the economic growth of the developing nations. It is scandalous to see that the developed countries spend $1 billion per day on agricultural subsidies, thereby condemning the inhabitants of the developing nations to poverty. For that reason, it is essential to implement the mandate of the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization.

The World Bank has very skilfully summarized what we must do to meet the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. First, we the developing countries must improve our public policies and institutions. Secondly, the developed countries must eliminate trade barriers and better coordinate development assistance. Thirdly, the donor countries must provide an additional $60 billion annually in development assistance. That amount is equal to just one-sixth of the annual total of the agricultural subsidies of the developed countries and 7 per cent of the total military budget worldwide. The obligations and responsibilities are clearly defined.

We have only 13 years left to meet the goals of the Millennium Declaration. We must heed the appeal of the Secretary-General. We must adopt broad, resolute and courageous measures in order to meet the objectives agreed upon by our heads of State. If we do not do so, the Declaration of our heads of State will remain a dead letter.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting us with his report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/57/270) and his report on the work of the Organization, under symbol A/57/1. Both complement each other perfectly, are highly illustrative and contain highly pertinent reflections for our future work. However, the documents also have different perspectives: one concentrates on the work of the Organization, the other on its impact on the world that surrounds us.

Both reports — and most of the statements we have heard in the course of the debate — naturally refer to mixed results: a panorama of achievements interspersed with shortcomings and even failures. That is natural. The United Nations is an extremely complex Organization which deals with a very wide range of issues, and which is characterized by complicated work procedures. For that reason, it is only on rare occasions that we can talk about the unqualified success or total failure of the Organization's work. The results are almost always somewhere in-between. Regarding the impact of our work, it is difficult to establish cause-and-effect relationships between our decisions and their result in the real world, since other factors not necessarily in our control come into play.

With respect to that last point, we must recognize that if the question under discussion today were to

assess the impact of the decisions taken in the United Nations in terms of their results, we would surely be more than justified in feeling frustration. For, in addition to the longstanding and well-known problems of poverty, disarmament, environmental degradation, human rights violations and tensions between and within States, we are worried by the intensification of violence in the Middle East, the dangers of a conflict in the Persian Gulf and what appears to be a step backwards on disarmament. At the same time, the recession in the global economy has contributed to the fact that the region to which I belong, Latin America and the Caribbean, is facing its third consecutive year of economic stagnation with all that that entails. It suggests, among other things, that the development goals established in the Millennium Declaration are increasingly difficult to meet.

However, the fact is that we are not here only to assess the current state of the world, but mainly to examine the recent work of the Organization, particularly its capacity to meet the Millennium Development Goals. From that perspective, our interpretation of the information provided by both reports is much more encouraging, so much so that we would be so bold as to make the following affirmation, which some might consider rash: Since the creation of the United Nations 57 years ago, until now, it is difficult to find a concentrated two-year period that has been as fruitful in terms of results as the two years since the Millennium Summit; in other words, from 2000 until today.

I would like to mention a few examples. First, a few days ago we all participated in the ceremony admitting the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations. The moving and inspiring history of Timor-Leste is due to many actors, but there is no doubt that without the United Nations, the happy outcome observed would not have been the same.

Secondly, the United Nations has played a unique role in making the public aware of the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS in the world, particularly in Africa. Milestones in that activity were the General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS and the participation of the United Nations in the creation and the implementation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. That is one of the issues the Secretary-General highlights in his report contained in document A/57/270.

Thirdly, the African continent seems much more promising today than even three years ago. The credit goes firstly to the Governments and peoples of Africa. However, the United Nations again played a definitive role in resolving or mitigating long-standing conflicts and played an equally important role in contributing to a framework in which the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development could thrive.

Fourthly, the United Nations had notable success in placing development at the forefront of the international agenda, in large part because of the preparation and holding of the Monterrey and Johannesburg summits.

Fifthly, equally notable are the bridges built between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, on the one hand, and the ministries for foreign relations and for finance, on the other. A reading of the communiqué issued on 28 September by the Development Committee places the United Nations as the main point of reference for the international financial community — something which would have been unimaginable just a few years ago.

Sixthly, the creation of the International Criminal Court under the auspices of the United Nations marks an important step towards limiting impunity in the world.

Seventhly, the rapid mobilization of the international community around the fight against terrorism following the events of 11 September 2001, and the role played by the United Nations, must also be recorded as important progress in the context of international cooperation to respond to common problems.

Finally, important progress has been made in United Nations conflict-prevention capabilities. At least that fact has been recognized by others. It was invoked by the Nobel Peace Committee in its announcement of 12 October 2001, as one of the reasons for awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and to its Secretary-General.

I do not want to prolong my statement by adding a long list of important achievements — achievements that are not diminished by the obvious shortcomings of the Organization, which we also recognize and which we will address in a few weeks when we examine the

Secretary-General's further reform proposal, contained in his report in document A/57/387.

The main point that we wish to underscore is that today, when we are all concerned about the future of the United Nations in the context of a wider discussion — to simplify, let us call it multilateralism versus unilateralism — and when the Millennium Development Goals are seriously jeopardized by the recession of the international economy, it is relevant to recall and to emphasize the Organization's notable achievements since the Millennium Summit was held. Further, the gap between the Millennium Development Goals and actual achievement thus far not only points to underperformance, but also shows the unrealized potential of the United Nations. In fact, if we feel frustrated by insufficient progress in the field, the fault does not necessarily lie with the United Nations.

On the other hand, the goals and the guidance offered in the Millennium Declaration, as well as those contained in other collective decisions, including particularly the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Action, offer us a vision and point to the road to be followed. It is up to us to embark on that road.

In conclusion, the perusal of the two reports before us reminds us implicitly and explicitly that the United Nations is vital to humanity, not only because of its ideals, but also because of its tangible achievements and its potential to contribute to pointing the way forward. Let us remember that; now that the conflicting concepts to which I referred seem to be intensifying, multilateralism definitely must prevail for the good of us all.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the work of the Organization and on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, as contained in documents A/57/1 and A/57/270, respectively. My delegation also commends the Secretary-General for his vision, courage and determination to effect change in meeting the challenges faced by the United Nations, and for his strong commitment towards multilateralism in resolving issues of common concern to all nations. This is further reflected in his statement to the General Assembly on 12 September and in his report on the strengthening of the United Nations, as contained in document A/57/387. To a large extent, we share the Secretary-General's analysis of the current global situation and his concerns about the future of the Organization.

I also wish to congratulate the President for his wise decision to have these two interrelated agenda items considered in a joint debate. This will not only enrich our discussion but also improve efficiency in the work of the General Assembly. This should be a good beginning to what ought to be a comprehensive process of change in the General Assembly and other intergovernmental organs of the United Nations. We certainly need to respond to the change and improvements in the Secretariat being effected, and further proposed, by the Secretary-General. We also need to work more seriously towards strengthening the General Assembly, enhancing the Economic and Social Council and reforming and increasing the membership of the Security Council. As a newly elected member of the Economic and Social Council that will begin its term in 2003, Malaysia looks forward to working with others to enhance the work of that organ and its subsidiary bodies. We sincerely hope that, under the current presidency, the General Assembly can begin to respond positively and speedily to the Secretary-General's appeal for a reduction in the number of meetings held and the reports issued under the auspices of the various intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations. The decision lies with us, the Member States. Let us begin the process of reversing this trend now, for our common good.

The Secretary-General has reminded us of the numerous setbacks to international peace and security in the past year. We continue to witness numerous situations around the world that threaten international peace and security. Indeed, the world seems a much more dangerous place now, especially as the spectre of war in the West Asian region looms before us.

In the Middle East, Israel persists with its brutal occupation of Palestinian territory, the systematic dismantling of Palestinian institutions and the prolonged action to humiliate and subdue the Palestinian leadership and people. My delegation appreciates the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General to address the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. We are encouraged by his constant contacts and involvement with the Quartet, as well as with other interested parties in the region. Serious effort must be made to resume the peace process and realize the two-State solution envisioned in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002).

We concur with the Secretary-General that further efforts should be made by all States to combat international terrorism, which remains a threat to international peace and security. This necessitates collective action on the part of the international community. This should also be done within the ambit of the United Nations, particularly in respect of the establishment of the necessary legal framework to prevent and suppress terrorism. We must not ignore the root causes of terrorism. We must understand them and find appropriate solutions, which may not necessarily be in the form of violent responses. My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that Member States bear the primary responsibility in the fight against terrorism. At the same time, we should strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to coordinate action as well as assist Member States, including through the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

My delegation remains concerned about the threat of military attack against Iraq. We join others in counselling restraint. We urge that all diplomatic avenues and measures be explored and exhausted so that war and its tragic consequences can be avoided. All parties concerned should focus themselves on preventing war, instead of moving precipitously towards one. The central role of the United Nations, and in particular that of the Security Council, must not be cast aside. Iraq must be willing to allow the unconditional return of United Nations arms inspectors and comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In turn, the Council should be able to act wisely and courageously, taking fully into account all the implications and ramifications. My delegation places a lot of hope in the collective wisdom of the members of the Council to address the issue at hand with the utmost care and responsibility. They must maintain the Council's credibility. They must ensure that the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations are fully respected by all concerned. On a matter of grave importance to the whole international community such as this, we urge the Council to provide the opportunity for the entire membership of the United Nations to express its views. This should best be done in an open debate at the Council, before it decides on the matter.

The United Nations cannot simply be dismissed as being irrelevant when the very principles that all its Members believe in, and strive to uphold, are being challenged. My delegation hopes that the Security Council, and its permanent members in particular, will make a serious effort to ensure that all Member States comply with Council resolutions. For many people around the world, the United Nations remains the last hope for the peaceful resolution of conflict in the effort to maintain international peace and security. Here, I should like to reiterate the words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia in his statement at the Millennium Summit, in 2000, when he said that, for many, the United Nations is

> "the repository of their hopes and aspirations for a better and more equitable world order based on the principles of shared responsibility, commitments and obligations — as an important forum for the articulation of their views, but they also expect it to be responsive to their concerns and needs". (*A/55/PV.5, p. 44*)

The United Nations must cater to the needs of its entire membership, particularly the majority group of developing countries. Smaller Member States, especially those in the least developed category, should not feel that they are being sidelined, but can expect to participate in the discussion of global issues and make a meaningful contribution, irrespective of their size.

The Secretary-General has referred to action taken by the Security Council to impose targeted sanctions and modify existing sanction regimes. Malaysia remains concerned about the profound socio-economic effects of sanctions on a society and about the political and psychological scars that are left on an entire population. It is therefore important that not only the humanitarian consequences but also the political impact of sanctions be constantly evaluated to ensure effectiveness and the correct achievement of objectives. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that targeted sanctions could play an important deterrent role and contribute to an overall strategy of preventive diplomacy.

We are fully supportive of the Secretary-General's efforts to continue to promote the culture of conflict prevention at the United Nations and of his efforts to prevent armed conflict and promote peace-making in various regions of the world. We share his view on the need to address the discrepancy between vision and reality in the promotion of conflict prevention. We continue to believe that the United Nations is well placed to provide the necessary impetus

and to assist Member States to realize the vision of peace that is contained in the Charter and that has been further reiterated in the Millennium Declaration. At the same time, Member States must do their part. They should respond positively, for example, to the Secretary-General's concern that United Nations peacekeeping continues to be challenged by the shortage of troops. There has to be strong political will from all Member States to cooperate, assist and contribute.

We are gratified at the success achieved by the United Nations in unique situations as found in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. We happily welcome Timor-Leste as the youngest Member of the United Nations. We welcome the positive developments elsewhere. While recognizing that in Afghanistan significant political progress has been achieved in recent months, we remain concerned that inadequate funding to support the Government and assist in economic reconstruction could threaten to negate the concerted efforts of the United Nations and the international community. The delicate peace process, so meticulously engineered, could unravel without the sustained support and commitment of all parties. Malaysia remains fully supportive of all these efforts.

Progress in the area of disarmament has not been very encouraging. We should naturally be concerned by tensions building up between States possessing nuclear weapons, referred to in the Secretary-General's report. Recent developments clearly point to the possibility of a new generation of nuclear weapons being produced, in addition to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction falling into the wrong hands. The slow pace towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, again proves to us that much more needs to be done.

My delegation is particularly disappointed at the lack of progress made by the nuclear weapon States in their non-implementation of the 13 steps towards nuclear disarmament that they agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. We earnestly hope that the United Nations can ultimately play a more significant role in moving forward the global disarmament process. We know the heavy odds stacked against the Organization. We must, however, continue to strive after the goals which have been so painstakingly negotiated in the United Nations. My delegation wishes to reiterate here that Malaysia and other like-minded countries will continue with their efforts at this and future sessions of the General Assembly for follow-up action to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary-General has underscored the need to further strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations to respond quickly and effectively to humanitarian challenges. We would support any measures taken by him to improve existing system-wide policies and mechanisms and to develop new ones.

We note that the safety and security of humanitarian staff remains a major problem. We welcome the presence of a full-time Security Coordinator at the Assistant Secretary-General level and the various initiatives taken to improve humanitarian staff security management.

On a number of occasions, in the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and this Assembly, my delegation has suggested that the United Nations give due recognition to the important contribution and sacrifice made by humanitarian workers. We note, for example, that during the first seven months of 2002, four United Nations staff members have been killed and two abducted. We wish to reiterate our view that the United Nations could consider appropriate ways to honour them in the manner that it honours peacekeepers. My delegation would be happy to work with other delegations and the Secretariat on this matter.

The work of the United Nations cannot be divorced from efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The Secretary- General has stated that there are opportunities for rapid reduction of extreme poverty in most developing countries. But the question of lack of resources has to be seriously addressed in order to allow countries, particularly in Africa, to achieve the poverty reduction goal at the national level by 2015. There is a clear and urgent need to close the gap in financial resources required for countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

The Secretary-General, in his statement last Friday, has urged Governments to take the necessary measures to keep the promises made in the Millennium Declaration. While domestic action needs to be taken individually by Member States, we should continue to deliberate in this body and other organs and agencies of

the United Nations on ways and means to bring to fruition the goals set by the Millennium Summit. My delegation also hopes that the Secretary-General will continually strive to ensure that the United Nations system is able to respond effectively and efficiently in assisting Member States, in particular the poorer developing countries, so that most of those goals can be achieved.

We fully concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that "summit fatigue" and the implementation of ambitious goals need to be seriously addressed by all. The Conference on Financing for Development, the Doha Ministerial Meeting and the World Summit on Sustainable Development have further set many goals and provided a long list of actions to be implemented. What is clearly needed now is follow-up by all concerned, individually and collectively, along with the necessary political will. My delegation is supportive of the President in his determination to devote special attention to the coordinated and integrated follow-up of the outcomes of these major United Nations international conferences, including the Millennium Summit, as the President has stated in his statement last Friday.

The Secretary-General has highlighted also the treatment and prevention of major diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, as one of the Millennium Declaration themes for the current year. We note with grave concern the threat posed by infectious diseases, HIV/AIDS in particular. HIV/AIDS is no longer merely a health problem. It is a total human problem, a serious threat to the security and development of nations. Despite advances in treatment and care, which are widely available in high-income countries, HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and health infrastructure are lagging behind in low- and middle-income countries, where the disease is most prevalent. It is therefore imperative for the developed countries to assist the countries concerned. Malaysia is very concerned over the threat of HIV/AIDS and stands ready to work with others to enhance international cooperation in this regard.

My delegation is encouraged by the continuing reform efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General, including transforming the management culture of the United Nations. We fully support the Secretary-General's reform package as outlined in his report on the "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". Efficient and highly motivated staff, professional management and prudent financial management and budgetary practices are the cornerstones of a good organization.

My delegation, representing a Government that has for a number of years already advocated the development of electronic government processes, applauds the present initiative to convert manual and paper-based processes to an "electronic United Nations". This is something that we should all look forward to. We anxiously await the beginning of an era when we do not have to contend with the mounds of printed documents emanating daily from the United Nations.

Human resources management, particularly staffing, continues to be an important issue in enhancing efficiency within the Organization. We commend the introduction of the global web-based electronic recruitment tool, "Galaxy". We feel that this will allow many younger, bright men and women to apply for jobs in the United Nations, thus making the Organization more dynamic and responsive to change and innovation. In the same context, the adoption of a more modern strategy in the information and communication fields will further improve the overall management of the organization.

My delegation also views with much interest the pro-active proposal to refurbish the present United Nations Headquarters, the Capital Master Plan and the construction of a 900,000 square foot, 35-storey building for "swing space" south of 42nd street. We note that the projected cost of the Capital Master Plan is estimated at $1.1 billion to $1.3 billion. Since the projected completion period for the Capital Master Plan is six years into the future, we hope there will not be cost overruns, though a comprehensive and detailed cost analysis has been carried out.

We are also encouraged by the improving financial base of the United Nations in the vital three components: cash on hand or liquidity, level of paid assessments, and debt to Member States. It is our fervent hope that the other aspect of the United Nations financial situation — the cyclical cash-flow variations — can be similarly addressed with the reduction in the number of cross-borrowings from active peacekeeping missions.

In the past year we have witnessed both a challenge to the existence of this Organization, in the form of a strong trend towards unilateral approaches,

and the collective gathering of political will and resources by the international community to combat international terrorism in the wake of 11 September attacks. Regrettably, this latter trend has been somewhat short-lived in the wake of several signs of shying away from multilateral treaties. There is also the growing tendency to force the Organization to become irrelevant in some areas.

The Secretary-General has responded decisively and on a timely basis by urging Member States to return to the fundamentals of this Organization, that is, to return to multilateralism. Malaysia strongly shares the sentiment that he expressed. We must rededicate ourselves to the multilateral approach in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. We sincerely hope that that call will be met with continued vigour by all Member States, in strict conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): First of all, in view of the reports that the Secretary-General has submitted to us on the activity of the Organization and on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, I should like to congratulate the Secretary-General on those two very high-quality documents. The necessary exercise in which we are participating today allows us to evaluate the importance of the work accomplished in the past year by the Organization by way of a sort of accounting, and it also gives us the opportunity to survey the path still ahead in order to reach the goals we set for ourselves two years ago.

As we do every year, we must first of all realize the considerable amount of work accomplished by the Organization. We would note, with a certain satisfaction, particular efforts that have been made with a view to carrying out the recommendations formulated by the Secretary-General in his report of June 2001 concerning conflict prevention. Those efforts are aimed at obtaining better cooperation from Governments, at lending more sustained support to all regional and subregional initiatives for peace and stability, and at encouraging countries to integrate conflict prevention into their development programmes

The work accomplished by the Organization to improve the management of peacekeeping operations, especially through the implementation of recommendations of the Working Group on such operations, deserves our full attention. The measures agreed upon, especially at the level of rapid deployment capacities — which have long been requested — and the Assembly's approval of the concept of strategic deployment stocks constitute significant progress. Lastly, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is being restructured, and that is a very positive result.

The Moroccan delegation would like to welcome the initiative announced by the Secretary-General concerning the establishment, for the first time, of a manual devoted to peacekeeping operations and to more detailed instructions for military missions. All those measures will undoubtedly improve the management of peacekeeping operations, but they continue to be understaffed, as the Secretary-General pointed out.

The past year, unfortunately, was the setting for dramatic events that upset our perceptions of the stakes and the challenges of international security. The tragic attacks of 11 September 2001 led the Organization to play an unprecedented role in the fight against terrorism. Those tragic events will have demonstrated that the new challenges to international peace and security call for a collective response on our part, based on an increased effort of cooperation and solidarity among nations, which is the only way to contain and to eradicate the upsurge of such new threats.

I should also like to mention the situation of Africa, a continent to which we fully belong, in our hearts but also geographically, as everyone knows. It is evident that Africa was confronted by the challenge of globalization first and was its first victim in a certain sense. This year, a significant step was taken when the international community decided to strongly support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was the subject of an in-depth debate in this Hall on 16 September. Africa has thus moved to the centre of the international community's concerns, and we are pleased to note that the Organization has decided to make Africa's development one of its first priorities.

Likewise, we note with satisfaction the role to be played henceforth by the Economic and Social Council in helping certain countries to emerge from conflict by creating ad hoc groups for that purpose. Here, I should like to emphasize the first initiative taken in that regard with the creation of a group for the fraternal country of Guinea-Bissau, which is linked to Morocco by

profound historic ties that go back to the struggle of national liberation.

Despite everything that has been accomplished and all the progress that I have just recalled, we are far from attaining the objectives we have set for ourselves. The commitments undertaken with regard to poverty, which must be reduced by half; to the definitive arrest of the HIV/AIDS epidemic; and to the universalization of education by the year 2015 are far from being attained. More progress has been achieved in some regions than in others, especially in East Asia. But, as I just said, Africa is still, unfortunately, the continent that has been left out and that needs redoubled international assistance. Therefore, we must redouble our mobilization for Africa. We must say that and repeat it here.

The Summits held at Monterrey and at Johannesburg have certainly enabled us to make some progress on development financing and on sustainable development. Still, my delegation would like to emphasize here that we attach the greatest importance to the development of a follow-up mechanism for those major conferences. Such a mechanism should not add a new bureaucracy or burden existing meetings.

Miss Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the chair.

Basically, what is needed is to decide, within the framework of the General Assembly or of the Economic and Social Council, which items require special follow-up, and then to entrust them to an open-ended and informal working group that would report on the issue within a given time frame. Morocco is prepared to consider the relevance of such a mechanism with interested delegations.

Perhaps the Secretary-General could prepare a preliminary biannual report or document, for example in the month of May. We could consider such a document when it comes time to elect the President of the Assembly and the Bureau, and it would help us decide on the priority issues for the next session.

It could be useful to consider this issue before the summer, in the context of efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, to streamline its work and to restore it to its rightful place in the structure of our Organization.

Today's debate, as well as the debates that we have had from year to year, and the process improved and perhaps streamlined, so as to focus on the essentials at every session, perhaps by entrusting certain debates to smaller groups. What is at stake is the credibility of the General Assembly.

Finally, we truly believe that the Secretary-General's leadership and guidance should be encouraged, especially in conflict prevention and political mediation, so as to help the parties involved in a conflict that could threaten international peace and security to find a peaceful solution. From this standpoint, our Organization must redouble its efforts to help African countries to settle their disputes and to focus on economic development for the benefit of their peoples.

The generation to come during this century must be a generation of builders, following the generation of the previous century, who were nation-builders. Contrary to what we might have thought a few decades ago, the freedom of peoples is not a point of departure but an objective that can be achieved once peoples have overcome the obstacles to their security and their development.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): I would like to join previous delegations in commending the Secretary-General for producing comprehensive reports on the work of the Organization and on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. An exhaustive review of the activities of the United Nations has been carried out in order to identify solutions to the new challenges facing us, which have become more complex and demanding in today's increasingly globalized world.

The Secretary-General clearly indicates that the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of sustainable and socio-economic development are closely linked and interrelated. We concur with the Secretary-General that today no single country has the capacity to cope with the political, economic, environmental and technological challenges of an interconnected world.

We consider the maintenance of international peace and security to be an essential part of the Organization's responsibilities, and therefore we fully endorse the emphasis placed in the report on the work of the Organization on the need to do more to help those persons living in conditions of extreme insecurity to advance towards peace.

We share the concern of the Secretary-General about the current status of international negotiations on disarmament and arms control. Negotiations on nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on fissile materials, as well as efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space, have now reached a deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. The review of the Biological Weapons Convention has been suspended, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force.

However, we have witnessed positive steps in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation transparency. Among them is the expert group's agreement reached in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and their commitment to sign the treaty this year. Kazakhstan, which has experienced the destructive power of nuclear weapons, is convinced that this is an important event not only for the Central Asian countries but also for the United Nations, which has been involved in this process since 1997. We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is compatible with the integrity and sustainability of the international non-proliferation regime.

Peacekeeping operations continue to be the key instrument available to the United Nations. Therefore, its ability to effectively plan and manage peacekeeping operations must be enhanced.

Kazakhstan is committed to a peaceful, prosperous and just world. We support the strengthening of the central role of the United Nations in its efforts to provide predictability and order, ensure global stability and build equitable relations between States and peoples on the basis of mutual respect and universal values.

My delegation fully concurs with the view expressed by the Secretary-General that the international community has a long way to go towards fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration and that reaching those goals rests, more than ever, on the ability of the Member States to take sustained, united actions.

The United Nations has demonstrated its capacity to adapt to rapid fluctuation in the world, coping successfully with serious challenges. However, it is important for the Organization to ensure that its programme of work reflects the priorities of the Millennium Declaration. We share the view of the Secretary-General that much progress could be made by elaborating coordinated strategies that combine the efforts of Member States, international institutions and agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, foundations and other actors of civil society.

The events of 11 September 2001 shone a spotlight on the vital importance of multilateral efforts to the maintenance of international peace and security and have given new impetus to concerted action against international terrorism, as pledged in the Millennium Declaration. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) is the key element of a determined response by the Organization to this global threat. Therefore it is important for countries to coordinate their measures to ensure the effective implementation of that resolution. The United Nations has a significant task ahead of it: to monitor the implementation of the resolution through the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Kazakhstan has always spoken out against terrorism and has been actively engaged in developing a system for countering terrorism at the regional and international levels. In June this year the first summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia was convened in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The heads of the major Asian States expressed their political will to strengthen peace and stability in the Asian region and to combat international terrorism by adopting the final documents of the summit, the Almaty Act and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism.

We welcome the clear recognition of the special needs of landlocked countries contained in the Millennium Declaration and the support for this group of countries by Member States during recent discussions in the Second Committee.

In this context, the coming international Ministerial Meeting, which is to be held in Almaty in the year 2003, will be the first legitimate forum where high-level officials from landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, donor States and international financial and development institutions will have an opportunity to draw up appropriate policy measures and action-oriented programmes aimed at developing efficient transit/transport systems.

The Millennium Development Goals have become the basis of the United Nations' economic and social policy. We welcome the international conferences in Doha and Johannesburg, which outlined steps to meet these goals. We are now gradually gaining the know-how and technology to solve problems in modern societies, but what we still lack is the appropriate implementation of decisions and sufficient funds to translate them into reality.

We believe that the current General Assembly session has to fully utilize its capacity in order to strengthen consensus on the goals so that they are ready to be used.

The Millennium Declaration has a bearing on strengthening the Organization. We firmly believe that, in an increasingly interdependent world, there is no alternative to multilateral cooperation. Only jointly can we work successfully for a world without war and conflict, a world based on justice and prosperity. The Secretary-General has made commendable efforts to strengthen the role of the Organization. We welcome his initiative to further reform the United Nations, an initiative that would help the international community to achieve the goals of the Millennium Summit. The implementation of these goals should remain our top priority.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, who will also speak on behalf of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the GUUAM Participating States — the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Two years ago, at the historic Millennium Summit and at the high-level Security Council meeting during the Summit, our leaders, enriched by the Organization's half-century of experience, adopted two declarations containing a common vision of the world in the twenty-first century: the Millennium Summit Declaration and a Declaration on ensuring an effective role for the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, especially in Africa. Having reaffirmed the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, they pledged to undertake new concerted efforts in order to free peoples from the scourge of war, to eliminate poverty, to promote sustainable development, democracy and human rights. The GUUAM countries are fully committed to the implementation of the goals contained in these historic Declarations.

I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for the preparation of his two comprehensive and thoughtful reports. Together with this year's road map, they provide a good overview of the progress achieved by the United Nations and its Member States towards fulfilling the Declaration's goals, and they point out areas where more effective efforts should be applied.

The brutal acts of terrorism perpetrated against the United States a year ago severely undermined our hopes that peace and prosperity would become the hallmarks of the new century. GUUAM firmly condemned these actions and unanimously stressed that the forces that support terrorist acts should be subject to severe punishment.

Bringing together the political, diplomatic, legal, economic, humanitarian and security dimensions of the counter-terrorism agenda, the United Nations provides an appropriate, effective framework for global actions against the global threat of terrorism.

As a regional organization, GUUAM stands ready to contribute and participate actively in the consolidation of the international community's efforts in its struggle against international terrorism. As of today, we can say that GUUAM States take part in all 12 universal anti-terrorist conventions through, inter alia, the appropriate bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.

At the recent GUUAM Summit, held in Yalta, Ukraine, earlier this year, the Presidents of our countries signed a Declaration on Common Efforts to Ensure Stability and Security in the Region. An important step in that direction is the signing of an Agreement on Cooperation among the Governments of GUUAM Participating States in the field of Combat against Terrorism, Organized Crime and Other Dangerous Types of Crimes.

The United Nations Secretary-General rightfully argues in his report that, for many people, progress towards peace and prosperity did not advance this past year as much as it should have. Besides the well-known United Nations success in Afghanistan, completion of the peacekeeping mission in East Timor, normalization of the situation in the Balkans and encouraging

progress in Sierra Leone and Angola, this year has also witnessed an aggravation of the situation in the Middle East, an escalation of violence in Central Africa and rising tensions in South Asia.

In this regard, I would like to draw your attention to the problem of the so-called frozen conflicts, which were left as unhealed scars in the newly independent States that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The international community cannot turn a blind eye to the lack of progress in the settlement of conflicts in Abkhazia, Georgia in Nagorny-Karabakh, Azerbaijan and in Transdnistria, Republic of Moldova, which for decades have been destabilizing the situation in our region. Postponing a final settlement of such crises might have irreversible consequences. Therefore, GUUAM Participating States condemn any action directed against their sovereignty and territorial integrity, including aggression and other forms of unlawful use of force, as well as outside support for separatist and extremist forces illegally acting on the territories of some of our members. We call on the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other international organizations to accelerate their efforts aimed at resolving these conflicts, in strict compliance with the norms and principles of international law.

We are most concerned at the lack of progress in Abkhazia, Georgia. Despite the hope that emerged after an endorsement by the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia and by the Security Council of the document "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competencies between Tbilisi and Sokhumi", the Abkhaz side continues brazenly to refuse to accept the paper. We strongly urge the Abkhaz side to engage in constructive negotiations on the substance of the document and call on all those with influence on the parties to do their utmost to advance this objective. We strongly believe that the settlement of this fundamental issue will greatly facilitate or even bring about solutions to many other problems, including the improvement of the security situation, the return of over 300,000 refugees and internally displaced persons and economic rehabilitation.

The implementation of the final documents of the Yalta meeting of March 2001 on confidence-building measures would facilitate the renewal of the political dialogue. We would also like to voice our concern over the provocations in the Khadori Valley of Abkhazia and Georgia. GUUAM commends the Georgian side for fulfilling all its commitments regarding the Khadori Valley, and we call on the Abkhaz side not to allow the situation in this valley to escalate.

Speaking of the situation in Georgia, I would like to express the group's satisfaction with the improvement of the situation in the Pankisi Gorge. The Georgian law enforcement agents have restored order in the Gorge. However, we are concerned by the continued attempts to heighten tensions over the issue. We would like to stress that any foreign unilateral military action on the territory of any GUUAM Participating State is absolutely unacceptable.

It is encouraging that after a year-long pause, the peace process in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova is back on track following a meeting of the parties and mediators in Kiev in July of this year; and that the parties have resumed their joint search for a solution to the existing problems at the negotiating table. We would like to use this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the peace process in the region and our undertaking to continue the efforts to advance the final settlement of the conflict based on the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova.

GUUAM supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about a shift in this Organization from the culture of reaction to that of prevention of conflicts. We strongly believe that a comprehensive strategy of conflict prevention should be developed within the United Nations, and it could take full advantage of such mechanisms as, in particular, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and preventive peace-building. In this regard, GUUAM is looking forward to the resumption of the discussion by the General Assembly of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention (S/2001/574).

Three milestone events — the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Food Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development — were held this year to expedite the progress towards meeting the development goals set out in our Millennium Declaration. World leaders forged tangible partnership and agreed on important documents that would guide further action to make those goals a reality for all. We are pleased to note that

these documents fully reflect special concerns of the countries with economies in transition.

There is no need to discuss whether improved health is central to the development process or not. Everybody knows of the devastating impact of diseases such HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in many countries, particularly in Africa. It is therefore imperative to ensure health coverage for the poor, reduce mortality rates, control the spread of communicable diseases, and improve maternal and child health care.

The effectiveness of mobilizing a global response to the epidemic depends largely on the ability of the international community to raise the necessary resources. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as a core-funding source to combat these diseases. We find it necessary to also strengthen the institutional capacity of the United Nations and other relevant bodies in this sphere.

With its universal mandate and huge potential, the United Nations has a leading role in pursuing the Millennium Declaration goals. Indeed, this Organization is the unique instrument available to us for finding global solutions to the global problems. This underscores the need to reform and strengthen the United Nations in order to enable it to deal successfully and effectively with the new and complex challenges of our age.

GUUAM welcomes the report of the Secretary-General "Strengthening of the United Nations: an Agenda for Further Change" (A/57/387), which suggests a number of improvements in that direction. We particularly support the intention of the Secretary-General to align the activities of the Organization with the priorities and objectives defined by the Member States in the Millennium Declaration and the decisions of the global conferences. GUUAM calls on the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of this report and looks forward to considering specific follow-up reports on various aspects of this new round of reform.

Finally, while acknowledging the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration goals, we must note that the international community is still at the beginning of the road. Only by our concerted and individual efforts, enforced by strong political will, can we make this world better for millions of people living today and for posterity. GUUAM stands ready to cooperate in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration goals with other Member States of the United Nations.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): At the outset, my delegation would like to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for the thoughtful reports on the Work of the Organization and the Follow-up to the Millennium Summit. Those reports accurately highlighted the overall work of the United Nations over the past year. Allow me to express our views on some of the issues.

The tragic events of 11 September seriously impacted the work of the United Nations. Our Organization has demonstrated the crucial role of multilateralism in combating terrorism. It has demonstrated that, when the international community is faced with imminent danger and tragedy, the strength of multilateralism comes to the fore. Multilateralism can make our tasks in safeguarding international peace and security more effective. It has beneficial effects on other important areas as well. To quote the Secretary-General,

> "when countries work together in multilateral institutions — developing, respecting, and when necessary enforcing international law — they also develop mutual trust and more effective cooperation on other issues". (*A/57/PV.2*)

Underpinning the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization is the importance of strengthening the Organization's role in peace and security and in meeting the ever-changing nature and growing complexity of international affairs. The United Nations is first and foremost a universal Organization firmly based on the sovereignty and equality of States. Therefore, in meeting the challenge of safeguarding peace and security, the principles of the Charter must be respected.

The report of the Secretary-General has underscored once again that there has been little international cooperation in multilateral forums on disarmament, despite the fact that the leaders of the world committed themselves in the Millennium Declaration to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We are distressed by the fact that multilateral negotiations on almost all fronts — nuclear disarmament, the treaty on fissile materials and efforts to prevent an arms race in

outer space – have remained deadlocked. We fully recognize the importance of bilateral efforts in the area of disarmament. At the same time, regarding this crucial issue on which the very future of mankind depends, we cannot but emphasize the critical role of multilateral cooperation on disarmament. Here, we once again call upon the Conference of Disarmament to establish on a priority basis an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament and to commence negotiations for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to eventual nuclear disarmament.

In reporting on the implementation of the Millennium Summit commitments the Secretary-General calls to our attention the fact that the world was falling short of the objectives agreed to by global leaders two years ago. The Secretary-General urges that

> "progress must be made on a much broader front, otherwise the ringing words of the Declaration will serve only as grim reminders of human needs neglected and promises unmet". (*A/57/270, para. 113*)

One of the important Millennium Development Goals is to reduce by half the number of people who live below the poverty line. It is estimated that 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day and about half of the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day. Much more needs to be done to meet the target of alleviating poverty. Faster economic growth is the major driving force to alleviate poverty. In this regard, we agree that eradicating poverty must remain a central priority for the United Nations system.

We welcome the creation by African leaders of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We view this as a highly significant initiative which could make a difference for the people of Africa. We share the view that NEPAD needs and deserves the strong support of the international community.

In the Millennium Declaration, we resolved to contain and roll back the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis by 2015. The twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly endorsed a bold Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. We are happy to see that increased political commitment has lead to the allocation of greater resources, both within national budgets and in development assistance. We must, however, remind ourselves that these resources fall far short of the estimated $10 billion that the Secretary-General has indicated are needed as a global response. In Myanmar, the Government has designated HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as diseases of national concern and is taking effective measures to combat them. We were therefore greatly heartened that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was established in January 2002. We pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his invaluable efforts in the establishment of the Fund.

In the two reports of the Secretary-General reference is made to my country. In one, my country is mentioned as being among those where the work of the United Nations has contributed to "their greater stability" (*ibid., para. 26*). In the other, the report mentions "a new beginning for the national reconciliation process" (*A/57/1, para. 27*). In Myanmar we are building a nation where peace, prosperity, justice and democracy flourishes. This, as the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy have pointed out, is a home-grown process. This is a process that has achieved significant progress. The Government and the people of Myanmar are determined to achieve our goal of bringing about national unity and to build a nation that will offer peace and prosperity.

Peace, stability and development are goals we have all aspired to in the Millennium Declaration. This is what we will strive to attain nationally.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Like previous speakers, my delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his concise and comprehensive report on the work of the Organization as well as for his analytical account and straightforward conclusions concerning the hard work ahead if we are to fulfil faithfully our commitments under the Millennium Declaration. Both reports deal fairly and squarely with the successes and failures of the Organization's efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals and to facilitate the solution of pressing global problems and the strengthening of international cooperation.

Today, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building activities of the United Nations are highly visible and often in the spotlights of the world media. The United Nations has made concrete strides during the past year in the settlement of regional conflicts. Its assistance was instrumental in the acquiring by East Timor of it independence and statehood; in establishing provisional self-governing authorities in Kosovo; and

in the effective functioning of the Transitional Administration in Afghanistan towards post-Taliban stability. I fully agree and endorse wholeheartedly the conclusion of the Secretary-General that

> "Developments during the past year have affirmed the Organization's increasing relevance in world affairs". (*A/57/1, para. 230*)

The implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflicts has produced promising results. The United Nations has secured greater cooperation with Governments in regions afflicted by conflicts. It is actively cooperating with regional and subregional institutions to promote peace and stability. There are signs of national reconciliation and of a serious search for peace and stability in Africa, which has been torn for many years by armed conflicts and internal rivalries.

It is noteworthy that the United Nations, with the strong support of Member States, has also been able to make considerable progress on improving its rapid deployment capacities.

It is the belief of my delegation that the United Nations, thanks to its firm commitment to the principles and practice of multilateralism, was able to cope with the extraordinary challenges to international security. The United Nations mobilized the world community in the struggle against terrorism, while carrying out successfully its mandate in the vast domain of human activities, including strengthening peace and security, meeting humanitarian commitments, fostering cooperation for development and promoting human rights.

The most important Development Goal contained in the Millennium Declaration is the resolve of world leaders to free their peoples from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. Understandably, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals varies from region to region. As the Secretary-General pointed out when presenting his report to the General Assembly,

> "On all our broad objectives — human rights, democracy, good governance, the resolution of conflicts and the special needs of Africa — we are moving too slowly."

That frank evaluation of the status of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration Goals, in the view of my delegation, is an urgent call to all Member States to translate into deeds the solemn commitments that they took collectively and individually. The Secretary-General further pointed out that not at the United Nations, nor by the work of the United Nations officials, can the Millennium Declaration Goals be achieved. Those goals have to be achieved in each of the countries that we represent, by the efforts of the Governments and people we represent. Thus, the primary responsibility of national Governments for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has been made clear beyond any doubt.

Mongolia fully subscribes to the concept of human security and sees it as an important factor of sustainable human development. My Government is presently working on the implementation of its national programme on good governance for human security, adopted almost two years ago. The programme aims to facilitate policy focus, coherence and sustainability of the overall development strategy, including poverty eradication. According to the present poverty reduction strategy, Mongolia will endeavour to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by at least 25 per cent by the year 2005 and to halve that number by the year 2015, as stipulated in the Millennium Declaration.

Mongolia managed impressive achievements in the education and health sectors prior to 1990. However, during the years of economic and political transition under severe financial strains, a significant part of those achievements was lost. The illiteracy rate among children is increasing rapidly. To guarantee one of the basic human rights — the right to education — Mongolia came forward with the initiative of launching the United Nations Literacy Decade, and the international community supported it by declaring the period of 2003 to 2013 the Literacy Decade.

The Mongolian delegation fully supports United Nations development strategy aimed at the eradication of poverty, the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development. As a landlocked developing country, Mongolia attaches special importance to United Nations activities to guarantee a more just distribution of the benefits of globalization among States by providing equal opportunities to participate in international trade and to gain access to international markets and financial resources for economic development.

The International Conference on Financing for Development arrived at a remarkable consensus on the need for global action to address development issues through adequate financing, human-centred development, policy reforms and the involvement of all stakeholders. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, while reiterating the importance of sustainability in the process of development, set a number of important objectives related to the use of natural resources, biodiversity and health. Thus, the conferences of Monterrey and Johannesburg are important milestones on the path towards implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

My delegation welcomes the continued efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations. We support a number of recommendations contained in his agenda for further change, as they are timely measures aimed at raising the performance in given areas and streamlining the Organization's budget and planning system. We are confident that a thorough review of the Organization's work programme will facilitate the aligning of the work programme with the Millennium Declaration Goals. We also applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General to find better ways of organizing relations with civil society.

In conclusion, I would like to welcome the launching of the Millennium campaign to popularize the Millennium commitments throughout the world. The campaign will help to focus the global action on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of the two reports before us, which are connected substantively in their various themes. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/57/1) provides a comprehensive review of the performance of the United Nations over the past year. The merging of discussions with the report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/57/270) is logical, as it provides a forward-looking, action-oriented vision of the challenges which lie ahead and the steps taken thus far in meeting the targets set by world leaders two years ago. The third aspect, that of the agenda for reform, which will be discussed in the coming weeks, provides the link in ensuring that there is institutional reform of the Organization to adapt to changing needs and priorities and to allow it to effectively carry out its mandate.

We have studied the report of the Secretary-General and especially congratulate him on the thoroughness of the review of the work done in the various fields. We particularly commend and endorse his statement in introducing the report at the opening of the general debate on 12 September.

The past year was a difficult one in which new challenges were posed by acts of terrorism and the military responses to them, as well as by the outbreak of renewed violence in the Middle East. Although there were some setbacks and there remains a lot to be done, it was a year of accomplishment in which substantial progress was made on several fronts. Peace and security was promoted through conflict prevention mechanisms, which helped to reduce the level and severity of conflicts. There was increased United Nations activity in meeting humanitarian emergencies. There was the successful conclusion of two major conferences on development. We also welcomed the further development of the international legal framework through the adoption of new legal instruments, especially with the coming into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The report shows that progress is being made and that efforts should now be focused on building on those achievements to preserve peace and promote further the goals of promoting equity in international economic relations. In that regard, three major international conferences held over the past year yielded encouraging results in terms of commitments for development cooperation. The Doha meeting on trade, the Monterrey Conference on financing for development and the Johannesburg summit on sustainable development reached consensus on a number of targets and undertakings. The challenge now is for implementation and follow-up. It would be most desirable, in that context, that some mechanism be devised that will provide for monitoring the follow-up and implementation of the results of those conferences. We all recognize that, although considered in separate venues, the subjects of trade, finance and sustainable development have an integrated relationship in the development process.

We, therefore, believe it necessary that the United Nations provide a mechanism that would allow all the major elements, especially financing and trade, to be considered within a broad dialogue on development. It should bring the major actors together, so that decisions are taken in relation to trade and finance that

could have more informed input, reflect the current priorities and needs and promote the broad interests of the international community.

In the same way as the Secretary-General has presented us with a road map for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, it would also be desirable to have continuing review and monitoring, as well as continuing refinement, of the development dialogue in line with the conclusions of the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences.

As far as the Millennium Development Goals are concerned, there is no doubt that their achievement will not be easy, but they are still attainable. From the Secretary-General's report, the indications are that, so far, there have been mixed results. The annexes to the report give us a quantitative measure of progress, and it is clear that in most regions, they are falling short of the targets set. That in itself should be a stimulus towards corrective action to establish better conditions for economic development and growth and for more ample provision and mobilization of financial resources to meet existing needs.

Jamaica continues to support the special attention to the needs of Africa, where we have seen positive improvements in stability and economic prospects, despite the prolonged drought in recent times and the ravages of the AIDS epidemic. We support the new initiatives in the African Union and in the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which should be given the fullest support of the international community.

Finally, Jamaica supports the development of partnerships that involve the business community and civil society. It is important that those initiatives focus constructively on the problems of poverty reduction and elimination, the promotion of sustainable development and the observance of human rights. In providing those partnership arrangements, however, care should be taken to ensure that adequate guidelines exist for proper accountability and that they are consistent with the principles guiding international economic cooperation.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It has been a good idea to review the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization together with the report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Both documents are undoubtedly complementary. The first provides us with a summary of the Organization's activities, for which the Secretary-General, as in previous years, deserves our sincere praise. The second one provides us valuable information on what has been done and what remains to be done to turn into reality the goals set forth in the Declaration.

A reading of the two reports allows us to conclude that the international community, acting through the system of the United Nations, has done a good job generally and has channelled its efforts in the right direction in almost all areas of international cooperation. The Secretary-General offers a balance sheet of the Organization's successes, but he also acknowledges the lack of progress in certain sectors, and that, as a result, some problems, such as poverty and underdevelopment, either remain serious or have worsened. We are still far from having achieved the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration.

What has prevented us from making greater progress? What do we need to change in order to achieve better results from our efforts? Where are the defects? Do they lie in the instrument or in those who use it? The reports now being considered confirm that, while the Organization needs change, the prime responsibility for the shortcomings in the fulfilment of the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration lies with us and with our Governments.

Our obligation at the United Nations is to continue to tackle problems together in a coordinated way. But we must change the focus of our efforts and place the emphasis not so much on producing resolutions and declarations proclaiming principles and purposes, but rather on seeking mechanisms, political means and practical measures to ensure the effective implementation of those principles and the achievement of those purposes.

Uruguay believes that everything we do in the common interest must be done within the framework of the political and legal system established nearly 60 years ago, at the end of the Second World War. This system has, despite its shortcomings and imperfections, succeeded, among other things, in maintaining peace overall, preventing local conflicts from spinning out of control, liberating a large part of the world from the yoke of colonialism, transforming respect for human

rights into a value of priority for the international community and becoming a focal point for the spread of democratic principles.

There is no doubt that much remains to be done, particularly in the area of security and economic development, but, whatever we do, we must do it together. We must continue along the path of multilateralism. Any other choice would mean the destruction of the present international system, without the promise of a viable system that ensures respect for the fundamental principles on which human coexistence is based.

Certainly, the structure and the functioning of the United Nations must be subject to additional changes to achieve more effective results. Uruguay wants to see the consultations aimed at reconfiguring the Security Council and revitalizing the General Assembly to continue, but with two caveats. Regarding the Council, we must be extremely careful to ensure that reform of that organ does not have the effect of making it less effective and less democratic than it presently is. Some proposals for expansion that seek to increase the number of members with the right of veto will clearly lead to that result.

As for the Assembly, a number of changes have already been made that will undoubtedly improve its functioning. However, the Assembly will not recover the authority it had in other times if it does not address the problems of streamlining its agenda, identifying its priorities, clearly determining the type of message it wishes to send to Governments and their peoples and changing the cumbersome style of negotiation that demands an enormous investment of time, energy and dedication to obtain results that are often not very impressive.

From the reports now engaging our attention, it can be deduced that the main responsibility for not advancing towards the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration can be attributed to States. In these reports, as well as in others submitted by the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and agencies, there are often references to the lack of resources to finance programmes, the lack of adhesion to instruments adopted in conferences or within international organizations, the failure to honour the commitments undertaken in these instruments and, in general, the lack of political will on the part of States to assume their share of the responsibility that lies within each of us in this very noble but frustrating task of creating a better world for ourselves and for future generations.

We will not succeed in achieving the goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration if each one of us, each one of our Governments, does not carry out at the national level the actions and measures prescribed in the Declaration and fulfil the commitments agreed upon internationally.

Mainly as a result of the lack of political will on the part of States, the failure to fulfil their obligations, and the reduction in contributions to humanitarian and aid programmes, we have reached the shameful situation in which millions of children continue to die each year from lack of medical care, or from lack of water, or from malnutrition, while the Governments of this Assembly's Members allocate each year more than 800 billion dollars to military expenditures.

These last months have been rich in events with respect to the aspirations and common goals set by the international community, such as the meetings in Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg. Their outcome complements those principles proclaimed in the Millennium Declaration and shows the path to their accomplishment. Time has come now to stop producing more proclamations and to embark on this path.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lesotho.

Mr. Moleko (Lesotho) *(spoke in English)*: I wish to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his insightful, visionary and comprehensive report on the work of the United Nations as well as on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

At the beginning of the general debate of the fifty-seventh session, the Secretary-General delivered his customary statement. In that statement, he extolled the virtues of multilateralism, an ideal which is the core value of the United Nations. It is worth noting that the importance of this ideal was also clearly expressed in his report on the work of the United Nations. In the report, he said that no single country has the capacity to cope with the political, economic, environmental and technological challenges in the interconnected world. My delegation is in full agreement with this fact.

In his statement in the general debate he referred to a myriad of global problems for which the only

viable solution is a unified effort. The problems I am speaking about include, but are not limited to, global warming, poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS. These are our common problems and no amount of unilateral action by any nation can eliminate them. Indeed, it was through unified action that we have reached the successes that we had in Afghanistan.

Menaces, such as terrorism, which threaten and claim the lives of millions of innocent civilians daily, can only be defeated if all nations, big and small, implement the vision of resolution 1373 (2001). No nation, regardless of its military, naval or economic strength can defeat this evil alone. Only if we work together in this multilateral Organization can we achieve more for the good of humanity.

My delegation fully endorses the Secretary-General in his statement that the more a country makes use of multilateral institutions, thereby respecting shared values and accepting the obligations and restraints inherent in those values, the more others will trust and respect it, and the stronger its chances of exercising true leadership. We believe that unilateralism and hegemony are to be discouraged.

My delegation believes that in order for this multilateral Organization to work well for the collective good, we need to strengthen or reform its main pillars, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat. The General Assembly is by far the weakest of these pillars, yet it is the one body in which all nations have an equal say. Therefore, it needs to be strengthened. The reform of the Secretariat has been in progress for a while, and we note with satisfaction that a great deal has been achieved up to now. We applaud the Secretary-General for his achievements in this matter.

What the United Nations needs to do, therefore, is to reform the Security Council into a more accountable, more transparent, more willing and able body that is pro-active and quicker in its reaction to all situations affecting international peace and security. While the Security Council has registered some success in fighting international terrorism, it must act with probity in all conflicts around the world.

The goals set two years ago in the Millennium Declaration represent the real hope for the international community. It is sad to witness that these goals remain as elusive today as they were then. The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS represents the most serious threat to the very existence of humanity. The rates, averaging up to 35 per cent in some countries in sub-Saharan African, are not only alarming, but also most certainly frightening. That is why HIV/AIDS represents an impending threat to our very existence. The international community needs to exert and apply greater effort to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS to ensure the survival of humanity.

The African people took a decisive step when they decided to move from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union. The Organization of African Unity has served our people well and generally has met its goals. The only outstanding milestone yet to be conquered is the independence of the people of Western Sahara.

The African Union is a visionary body, one that aims at emancipating our people from the claws of poverty. The African Union has programmes through which this can be achieved. In this respect, we must applaud the vision of the heads of States and Governments when they formed the African Union and elaborated the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an African bred and owned programme that aims to fight impediments to economic development, such as civil conflict, and rampant diseases, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

The date of 16 September was a very special day, a day in which this Assembly devoted its work to discuss how to support NEPAD. We are grateful for the support, but we must be quick to point out that what Africa needs is not only the good will of the international community, but also concrete financial resources to implement the programmes of the NEPAD.

In this connection, the United Nations must do more to prevent conflicts in the African continent. Our homegrown subregional and regional efforts need to be enhanced and supported by concrete actions from the United Nations. Post-conflict efforts spent by this Organization on the African continent can at best be described as a half-hearted delayed reaction, leading some to conclude and suggest that African conflicts have been shunted aside. This is a very serious indictment of the United Nations. We wish to see equity in how this Organization deals with similar problems around the world.

In Lesotho a concrete plan of action has been adopted to achieve education for all by 2015. The introduction of free primary education, now in its

fourth year, has been very successful. The Government has taken steps to target the parts of society that had hitherto not seen the benefits of education. While the programme is bearing fruit, such a major task cannot be undertaken without encountering problems, the most serious of which is the impact that HIV/AIDS is having on the teaching profession. This is an area that had its shortages prior to, and since, the introduction of the programme. However, HIV/AIDS seems to be the one problem that may undermine our very efforts. It is in that respect that we again appeal to the international community to spare no effort in fighting HIV/AIDS.

The achievement of the Millennium Declaration Goals must be central to the United Nations. Those objectives can only be achieved if we work together to implement the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. I wish to conclude by affirming that in Lesotho we believe in, and subscribe to, the ideal of multilateralism. Hence the United Nations can always count on us to do our part in advancing its ideals and goals.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his detailed presentation of the two reports that are before us at this meeting.

A clear appeal for multilateralism is the common denominator found in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. Never before has that appeal been stronger or more relevant, given the need to provide a common response to the problems confronting the world. While those problems are fundamentally complex, in and of themselves they also constitute one of the challenges assumed by Member States at the Millennium Summit. It is precisely in the context of the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his two reports that I would like to refer to a few specific items, bearing in mind the time constraints that prevent me from referring to other issues as I would have liked.

Colombia supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to make the United Nations an Organization geared more towards a culture of conflict prevention and less towards reacting to conflict. We believe that it is just such an approach that can more reliably and permanently contribute to establishing and maintaining peace and security. With regard to conflicts such as the one my country has suffered for several decades, we must emphasize that the efforts of successive Governments to find peace have steadily increased over recent years. Although at the beginning of this year we concluded the negotiating process with the largest of the groups acting illegally, my Government continues to make staunch efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Colombia has increasingly demonstrated more clearly its commitment to respecting human rights and international humanitarian law. The main international human rights and humanitarian law instruments to which Colombia is a State party have become permanent guiding principles of our State actors. I wish to mention just two examples that are particularly timely. Whether with regard to the systematic destruction of anti-personnel mine arsenals in the light of the commitments stemming from the Ottawa Convention or with regard to the treatment given to members of groups who have acted outside the law and who are now deprived of their freedom, the actions of the authorities in my country have been in keeping with the law.

I therefore wish to express our disagreement with the passage contained in the report of the Secretary-General in which, in referring to the conflict in Colombia, the Secretary-General states that there are "frequent violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by all parties." (*A/57/1, para. 30*)

Colombia requires, requests and hopes for more cooperation and less criticism from the international community, and from the United Nations in particular. We need more action and less diagnosis, as the President of Colombia recently affirmed in referring to the lack of alternatives proposed by multilateral organizations — and by the United Nations in particular — in response to the initiatives of my Government to protect the human rights of all Colombians and ensure the return of persons internally displaced by the conflict.

The challenges posed by humanitarian intervention continue to give rise to many questions, a matter that is also taken up in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations. My delegation therefore welcomes the report entitled "The Responsibility to Protect", which seeks to find an answer to the concerns regarding humanitarian intervention and the sovereignty of States. As other delegations have stated in this Hall, we believe it will

be necessary to carry out a sustained and in-depth debate on the proposals contained in the report.

The Organization is now facing the challenge of embarking on the implementation stage of the commitments that have emerged from past summits. We understand the "summit exhaustion" referred to by the Secretary-General in his report. We believe that, as the objectives have now been delineated clearly with regard to a very varied range of priority issues, it is now our duty to concentrate on the implementation of those objectives. That means that the Millennium Development Goals must continue to be the focus of our primary and best efforts. Given the need to combat poverty and inequality in our countries, our actions must be focused on the most vulnerable sectors of society, including older adults, children, women and the disabled. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, it is among such people that poverty — which is at the root of the social injustice that afflicts broad sectors of the world's population — continues to be most widespread.

Equally important problems such as the spread of infectious disease, in particular malaria and HIV/AIDS, seem to be getting worse, without any lasting solution in sight. We therefore welcome the appeal made by the Secretary-General on 1 October, when he asked countries to turn the commitments of the Millennium Summit into tangible action and to focus their efforts on having the General Assembly pay particular attention to following-up the Summit, especially bearing in mind the fact that 2003 will be the starting point for assessing the achievement of some of the Millennium Development Goals.

Three other important documents adopted by the international community in recent months that have been specifically mentioned in this Hall in the discussion of these two agenda items are the Monterrey Consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Doha Agenda. These will continue to serve as vital points of reference for action to benefit less developed countries.

I wish to conclude my statement by referring to two important aspects of the report of the Secretary-General that are of particular concern to my country, namely, the production of, and trafficking in, illicit drugs and the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Those two problems, which are often closely interrelated or related to other forms of organized transnational crime, constitute a grave threat to human security in Colombia. The fight against those two scourges will continue to top the list of security and safety priorities for my country. In the quest for solutions, I should like to emphasize the consistent support given by the United Nations Drug Control Programme and by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Lima, Peru.

Despite the progress achieved to date, there is a long road ahead. The attainment of the Millennium Development Goals requires joint effort and an environment of peace and economic stability, which our countries are trying to achieve within our limitations and possibilities. Only in this way will we attain the common goal of a more just world.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items for this meeting. We shall continue the debate tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.